

**Claim 1.**

A data processing machine for determining the price of containerized freight online,  
comprising

- 5       a central controller including a CPU and a memory operatively connected to such  
CPU;
- at least one terminal, adapted for communicating with such central controller, for  
transmitting to the central controller container pricing information including but  
not limited to some or all of loading port, discharge port, transit time schedule,  
service category, commodity type and equipment requirements;
- 10       the memory in such central controller contain a program, adapted to be executed  
by said CPU, for calculating a freight rate of containerized cargo within a future  
period, for a particular freight rate, a container shipper shall be said to satisfy  
loading port, discharge port, transit time schedule, service category type,  
commodity type, and equipment requirements;
- 15       wherein said central controller receives such information from said terminal and  
calculates the freight rate based upon the information provided.

**Claim 2.**

- The machine according to claim 1, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to
- 20       receive a customer request input via said terminal to purchase the option and further  
adapted to perform a credit check on the customer.

**Claim 3.**

The computer according to claim 2, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to receive a customer request input via said terminal to exercise a containerized freight booking and further adapted to generate a booking form (consistent with relevant standards) to book containerized freight in accordance with the container carriers unique bills of lading, terms and conditions on file with the Federal Maritime Commission, Washington, D.C.

Claim 4.

10 A method of determining the price of containerized freight and booking same using a central controller including a CPU and a memory operatively connected to said CPU and containing a program adapted to be executed by said CPU for determining the price of containerized freight, and a terminal adapted for communicating with said CPU, the method comprising the steps to:

- 15           • enter loading port parameters to the controller via the terminal;
- enter discharge port parameters to the controller via the terminal;
- enter transit time and routing parameters to the controller via the terminal;
- enter service category parameters to the controller via the terminal;
- enter commodity type parameters to the controller via the terminal;
- 20           • enter container equipment type parameters to the controller via the terminal;

And calculating the freight rate of a container that gives the customer a right to ship within a defined shipping period for a particular freight rate a container filled with lawful cargo satisfying the load port, discharge port, transit time, service category, commodity and equipment requirements by having the CPU execute said program;

5 and outputting the freight rate to the terminal

Claim 5.

A data processing machine for determining a freight rate to engage a container space, comprising a CPU and a memory operatively connected to said CPU, said memory

10 containing a program adapted to be executed by said CPU and said CPU and memory cooperatively adapted to receive container pricing information, and to calculate a price of a container to engage such shipment within a future period, for a particular freight rate, satisfying the cargo transport information submitted.

15 Claim 6.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein said program is adapted to receive freight pricing information comprising the load port, discharge port, transit time, service category, commodity parameters and equipment requirements

20 Claim 7.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to receive at least one of first information describing a desired load port, second information relates to desired discharge port, third information relates to required transit time and

routing, fourth information concerning service category, fifth information relates to commodity description and sixth information relates to class of equipment and wherein said platform is adapted to use such information to calculate the freight rate.

5 Claim 8.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to receive an indication that a customer has engaged a container space and is further adapted to update a database to reflect a unique container carrier booking.

10 Claim 9.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to calculate the container price based at least in part on the number of similar container bookings confirmed, using information stored in an option database.

15 Claim 10.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein said program in said memory program is adapted to calculate the container price based in part upon pricing information that is satisfied by all of the sensitive data input.

20 Claim 11.

The platform according to claim 5, wherein the said program in said memory is adapted to calculate the container freight rate based at least in part on the formula: Freight Rate = O. times F. times C. times V. times E. times S.

Where **O** is a ocean freight rate for the container, **F** is the standard option factor, **C** is a factor related to the commodity type, **V** is the factor related to volatility, **E** is a factor related to the equipment type and **S** is factor related to service category.

5    Claim 12.

A method of determining the price of a container shipment, comprising the steps of:  
receiving cargo transport parameters relative to the future booking of a container;  
calculating the price for a container booking within a defined shipping period for a  
particular price, a container shipment satisfying the cargo transport parameters;  
10    and outputting the freight rate.

Claim 13.

The method according to claim 12, wherein the step of receiving option pricing  
information includes receiving load port, discharge port, transit time, equipment type,  
15    commodity type and service criteria.

Claim 14.

The method according to claim 12, further comprising the steps of: receiving at least one  
of first information describing a desired category of service, second information  
20    concerning the expected cargo volume on voyages that satisfy the load port criteria and  
the transit time criteria, and third information concerning the cyclical nature of container  
prices, and wherein said calculating step further includes utilizing at least one of said first

information, said second information, and said third information to calculate the option price.

Claim 15.

- 5 The method according to claim 12, further comprising the steps of receiving an indication that a customer has purchased the option and updating a database to reflect the sale of the option.

Claim 16.

- 10 The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of receiving option sales information from an option database indicating a number of similar options that have been previously sold, and wherein the calculating step uses the option sales information in determining the option price.

15 Claim 17.

The method according to claim 12, further comprising the steps of receiving a customer request to purchase the option, receiving tender of the purchase price from the customer, performing a transaction to sell the option to the customer, and storing information regarding said option.

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Claim 18.

The method according to claim 17, further comprising the steps of receiving a customer request to exercise an option, performing a transaction to engage container space for the

customer in accordance with the terms of the option, and modifying the database to reflect the sale of the container space pursuant to the option.

Claim 19.

- 5 The method according to claim 13, wherein the calculation of the option price is based in part upon option pricing information that is satisfied by more than one criteria of the intended shipment.

Claim 20.

- 10 The method according to claim 12, wherein the calculating step includes calculating the option price based at least in part on the formula: Freight Rate = O. times F. times C. times V. times E. times S.

Where O is a ocean freight rate for the container, F is the standard option factor, C is a factor related to the commodity type, V is the factor related to volatility, E is a factor

- 15 related to the equipment type and S is factor related to service category.

Claim 21.

Computer executable process steps operative to control a computer, stored on a computer readable medium, for determining a price of an option to engage a container space,

- 20 comprising:

- a step to receive load port terminal criteria;
- a step to receive discharge port terminal criteria;
- a step to receive transit time and routing criteria;

- a step to receive service category criteria;
- a step to receive commodity type criteria;
- a step to receive container equipment criteria
- a step to output the option price.

- 5       • a step to calculate the price for an option to purchase, within a Laycan (shipping period), for a particular price, a container space satisfying the load port terminal criteria, the discharge port terminal criteria, transit time and routing criteria, service category criteria, commodity type criteria and the container equipment criteria.

10      Claim 22.

A method of pricing an option to engage container space, comprising the steps of:

- Inquiring on a freight rate for a container space;
  - Receiving said container price;
  - Receiving an offer to purchase for a given price an option to engage
- 15       within a laycan (shipping period), for a particular freight rate, the container booking; and
- Purchasing said option at said option price.

Claim 23.

- 20      The method according to claim 22, further including the step of using said option to engage the container space or an equivalent of said container booking.

Claim 24.



The method according to claim 22, wherein said step of inquiring on a container price includes providing shipment information including load port terminal, discharge port terminal, transit time and routing, service category, commodity type and container equipment criteria.

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Claim 25.

A data processing computer for selling an option to engage container space, comprising:

- A terminal adapted to communicate with a central controller that calculates a price of an option to engage a container space within a Laycan (shipping period), for a particular container price, said terminal adapted to transmit to the central controller option pricing information comprising load port terminal, discharge port criteria and transit time and routing criteria, service category criteria, commodity type criteria, container equipment criteria and further adapted to receive from the central controller a price of an option satisfying the load port terminal criteria, discharge port criteria, transit time and routing criteria, service category criteria, commodity type criteria and container equipment criteria.

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Claim 26.

- The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said terminal is adapted to transmit a customer request to purchase the option and further adapted to perform a shipping engagement utilizing a booking note (consistent with relevant standards) to book containerized freight in accordance with the container carriers unique bills of lading,

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terms and conditions on file with the Federal Maritime Commission, Washington, D.C.  
and to such option to the customer.

5    Claim 27.

The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said terminal is adapted to transmit a  
customer request to exercise an option and further adapted to confirm a booking note in  
accordance with the carriers unique bills of lading, terms and conditions on file with the  
Federal Maritime Commission to the customer in accordance with the terms of the

10   option.